DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 326 CE 084 944

AUTHOR	Green, Muriel
TITLE	Initial Assessment: A Learner Centred Process.
INSTITUTION	Learning and Skills Development Agency, London (England).
SPONS AGENCY	Learning and Skills Council, Coventry (England).
ISBN	ISBN-1-85338-841-6
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	81p.; CD-ROM not available from ERIC. Part of the Raising Quality and Achievement Programme run in partnership with the Association of Colleges and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.
AVAILABLE FROM	Learning and Skills Development Agency, Regent Arcade House, 19-25 Argyll Street, London W1F 7LS, United Kingdom (50 British pounds). Tel: 020 7297 9000; Fax: 020 7297 9001; Web site: http://www.lsda.org.uk/home.asp. For full text of booklet: http://www.lsda.org.uk/files/PDF/ISBN1853388416.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Research (143) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Adult Literacy; *Basic Skills; Check Lists; Cognitive Style; *College Students; *Evaluation Methods; Foreign Countries; Guidelines; Needs Assessment; Numeracy; Postsecondary Education; Questionnaires; Student Characteristics; *Student Evaluation; Student Needs; *Student Placement; Technical Institutes; Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Intake Interviews; *United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This document contains a booklet and companion CD-ROM that introduce and describe a learner-centered assessment process for assessing students' basic skills upon entry into post-16 provision at further education colleges in the United Kingdom. After introducing the concept of learner-centered assessment, the booklet outlines a comprehensive, holistic approach to assessment that includes the following activities: matching programs to learners' interests, aspirations, abilities, and needs; identifying levels of study or work; identifying individual strengths and learning needs; and assessing and responding to learning styles. Discussed next are the following aspects of managing the assessment process: consistency; staff confidence and competence; standardized administrative systems; and quality assurance. The remaining 50% of the booklet presents case studies of the four colleges whose practices are highlighted on the CD-ROM and a checklist for improving initial assessment. The appendix presents pertinent definitions. The CD-ROM is designed as an interactive flexible resource for free exploration of the initial assessment process. It uses video clips from actual college practice to illustrate the student-centered assessment process and explore issues related to assessment. (Materials that are being used at the case study colleges, including checklists, sample letters and student forms, questionnaires, and a tutor guide to learning preferences have been printed from the CD-ROM and are included.) (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. J. Nowocin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Learning+Skills Council

learning and skills development agency

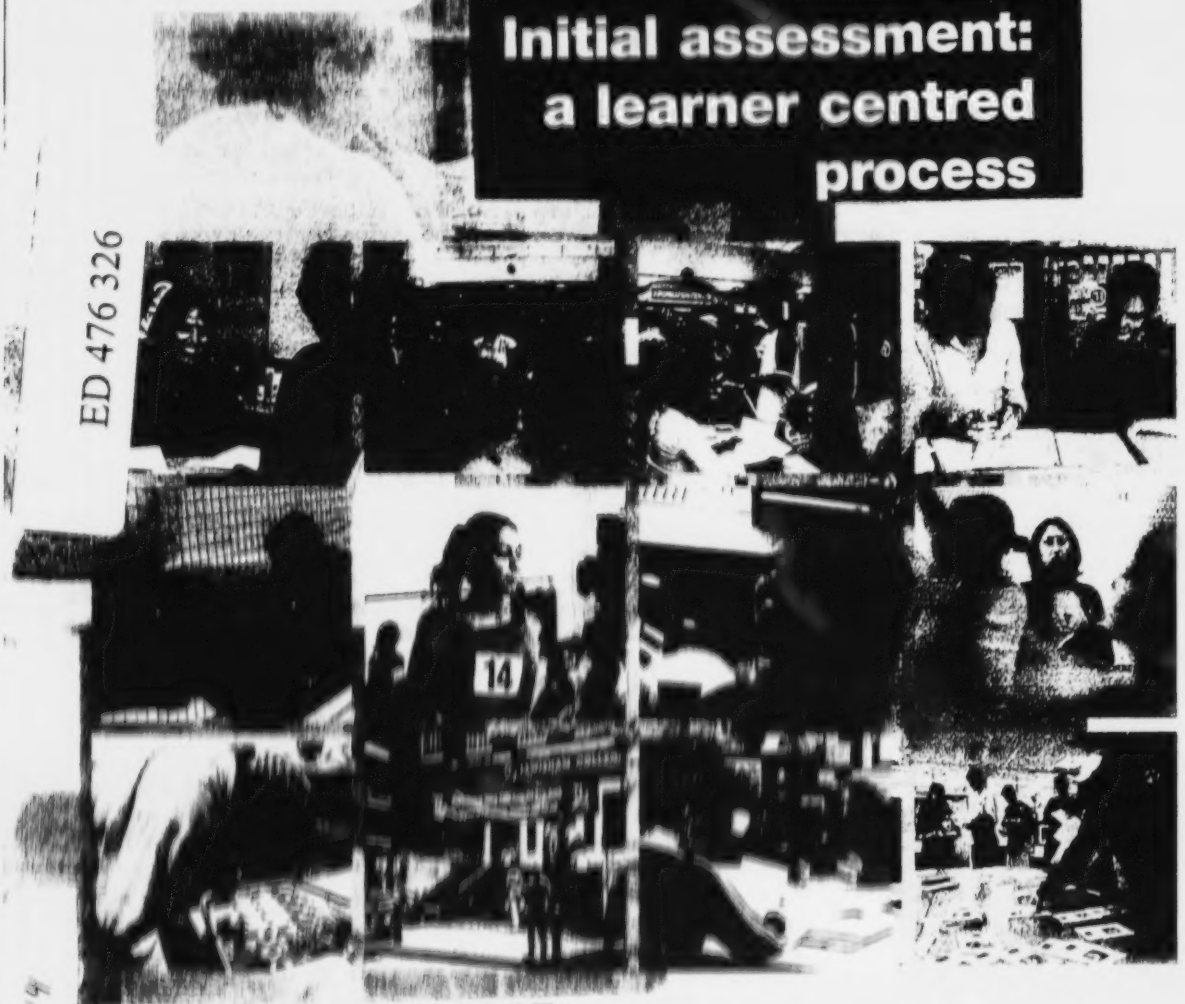
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Initial assessment: a learner centred process



ED 476 326

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE082944

Muriel Green

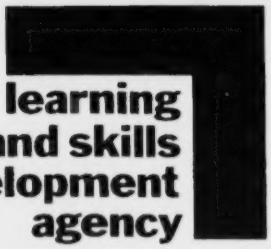
raising quality and achievement programme

The Raising Quality and Achievement Programme is run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency in partnership with the Association of Colleges and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.

- We aim to reach all colleges and work-based learning providers.
- We offer extra support to colleges and work-based learning providers that are receiving Standards Fund money to improve their practice.
- All our activity themes are backed by a programme of research and evaluation.
- The Raising Quality and Achievement Programme is funded by a grant from the Learning and Skills Council.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Learning+Skills Council



Initial assessment: a learner centred process

Muriel Green

Publication details

Published by the Learning and Skills Development Agency
www.LSDA.org.uk

Feedback should be sent to:
Information Services
Learning and Skills Development Agency
Regent Arcade House, 19-25 Argyll Street
London W1F 7LS
Tel 0207 297 9000
Fax 0207 297 9001
Enquiries@LSDA.org.uk

Registered with the Charity Commissioners

ISBN 1 85338 841 6

© Learning and Skills Development Agency 2003

You are welcome to copy this publication for internal use within your organisation. Otherwise, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, optical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Art Editor: Christina Ellcock
Designed by: PGD Limited
Printer: PGD Limited
CD-ROM produced by Skill Boosters, part of The BDP Media Group.

The Raising Quality and Achievement Programme is funded by a grant to the Learning and Skills Development Agency from the Learning and Skills Council.

Contents

Foreword 4

Introduction
a learner centred process 5

Initial assessment
- Purpose : why do you do initial assessment? 7
- Scope : how comprehensive is your initial assessment? 8
- Management : how consistent is your process? 12

Provider Case Studies 14
Huddersfield New College 14
Lewisham College 17
Middlesbrough College 20
South Nottingham College 23

Improving initial assessment
a checklist 26

Acknowledgements 28

Appendix
assessing basic skills at entry to post-16 provision 29

Using the CD-ROM 31

Printable materials 32

6

Foreword

If you are involved in an initial assessment process this resource is for you. I hope it can help you be more learner centred in your approach. This short book provides essential background to the things you can experience in using the attached CD-ROM.

The main focus is process. There is no attempt to make evaluative judgements about assessment tools. But because of the high priority given to the improvement of basic skills across the sector, I have included in the appendix information about the definitions and tools being developed through the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit for the assessment of basic skills at entry to post–16 provision.

This document provides an introduction and an overview of the initial assessment process. It also provides background information about the providers whose practice you can explore through the CD-ROM. I expect you may be interested to see some of their documentation? If this is the case you can view it and download it from the disk.

The CD-ROM offers an interactive flexible resource, a medium for your free exploration. It looks at different aspects of initial assessment including learners' perceptions of the process. Each section uses video clips to stimulate your interest and your thinking. Issues and questions raised have been designed to help you challenge some assumptions about your own practice and, I hope, see ways in which you might improve and develop your process to secure greater gains for your learners.

Video footage comes from college practice. However, the issues and questions raised are generic issues that I believe are applicable across the post–16 sector. The context in which you will see learners working will give "life" to what you see. But for the purpose of analysis you may want to think always about the learner experience.

What are learners doing? Why are they doing it? What do they understand about what is happening? How do they feel? How does it help them? What does it all mean to you and the ways in which you operate within your own context?

Where you feel there is scope to improve your own initial assessment process you can use the checklist on the CD-ROM to help you critically evaluate your starting point. You will find a copy of this checklist at the back of this book. I hope that you find the practice, issues and questions on the CD-ROM stimulate your thinking and provide ideas for improvement.

Muriel Green
Development Adviser, Raising Quality and Achievement Programme

Introduction

a learner centred process

Many providers share concerns that initial assessment can sometimes be seen as a bureaucratic exercise rather than as a process about learners and learning. Initial assessment needs to be done with learners rather than to them. It should be of benefit to learners and help them feel positive about themselves and their potential to learn.

It remains the case that many young people, who have neither done well at school nor enjoyed it, find their way into work-based learning. They have poor educational qualifications, and often, they are believed to have poor basic skills.

Annual Report of the Chief Inspector 2001–2002. Adult Learning Inspectorate 2002

Learners who cross the threshold into post-16 education or training come with diverse backgrounds and experiences. As they themselves acknowledge in the accompanying video clips, they are all "individuals", they are all "different". Initial assessment will help you explore those differences with them. Through a staged process, over time, it will help you put together an accurate picture of the interests, aptitudes, abilities and needs of each learner.

Many make their move into post compulsory education or training having previously had negative experiences of learning. They may have only modest or limited achievements:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Because of this, initial assessment needs to be a positive experience. It is important that the process is not seen as part of a deficit model that serves to undermine confidence by focusing only on the things that learners can not do Learners need to understand why it is happening and how it can help them.

Feedback should be offered as soon as possible after assessment. Ideally feedback should be used to increase the learner's self-awareness, build confidence and motivate them to succeed. Where learners are encouraged to talk about the outcomes of assessment they will be able to develop a language of learning. This will help them take an active role in making decisions about goals and targets for their individual learning plan. You will see examples of how this can work in practice on the video clips.

A learning plan can be a key document for the individual learner when it is a "live" document that provides a frequent reference point for progress review, recognition of success and the setting of new targets.

To what extent does your initial assessment process prepare your learners to engage in discussion to plan their learning?	

Initial assessment

Purpose: why do you do initial assessment?

Different assessment processes are needed at different stages of the learner's learning journey. Each has a different purpose. The terms to describe these assessment processes are not used consistently across the post–16 sector.

Throughout this resource I have used the term initial assessment to mean a staged process that helps the learner cross the threshold to the most appropriate post–16 provision. The outcomes of the process inform:

- early judgements about the learner
- the focus and level of learning
- the skills and needs that will be developed and supported

A holistic initial assessment process pulls together information from a range of sources to inform what the individual will learn and how they might learn it.

Assessment is both backward and forward-looking. In other words it makes judgements about previous learning and achievements whilst at the same time attempting to give indications, or measures, of the learner's capacity to progress along one of a number of pathways. The outcomes of the process shape the learning and support that can best secure achievement and progression for the individual learner.

Information about current interests and achievement can provide a strong basis. The outcomes of screening, diagnostic testing, induction tasks and activities can all be used to put together a detailed picture of the learner as he/she moves through the different stages of the process. Induction activities can be fun to do. They can create a positive climate and provide a valuable insight into a new area of learning at a critical early stage.

It is really important to "get it right", so that the learning and support opportunities offered are the best possible match with the interests, abilities, aptitudes, aspirations and needs of the individual. A learner who is on a programme at the right level, and has interest and aptitude for the things they do, will be more likely to be successful.

Initial assessment needs to be a positive experience for learners. Look at the video clips on the CD-ROM to get an insight into the perceptions and understandings of learners from across the country. What are the perceptions of your learners: what do they see as your reasons for assessing them at entry?

Scope: how comprehensive is your initial assessment?

You will want to know a lot of different things about learners as they move into your provision. Each stage of your initial assessment process will generate different kinds of information. It is important that information from a single stage of assessment is not over interpreted or used in a fragmented way. A holistic approach that moves from pre-entry and through induction will provide the most rigorous and comprehensive picture of the learner and their learning.

Snippets of information can come from a range of sources: the learner, those involved in the learner's earlier phases of learning, the results of testing, and the outcomes of practical tasks and activities.

To what extent do the people you see on the video clips have a shared understanding of a learner centred purpose and clear channels of communication? Think about the range of professionals who are involved in working with you to help put together a full picture of your learners. How can you forge strong partnerships with Connexions and Job Centre Plus to help your learners?

Matching the programme offer to the learner's interests, aspiration, abilities and needs

A well-managed selection interview can generate a lot of useful information. This can come from the learner, those involved with earlier phases of their learning or from qualifications. Such information can be drawn on to provide a strong indication of interest, aptitude and ability. It is at this stage that the learner and you can make decisions about the focus of their learning. The interview should help match the programme of learning to the interests, aptitudes and abilities of the learner.

The video clips on the CD ROM give you "stolen moments" from selection interviews with different providers. You will also be able to print out documents that relate to this important stage of the process. How effective are your interviews in creating a good match between learner and programme of study or work?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Identifying a level of study or work

Some providers will also use an assessment test or task at this early stage to help determine the level of study or work. In the case of basic skills, you will be advised to use initial assessment materials that are based on the national standards for adult literacy and numeracy. Details of these materials can be found in the appendix on page 29. In the case of key skills or subject/vocational skills you will be using screening tools/tests.

As a simple rule of thumb, it may help to remember that screening tests provide crude measures and seek to place individuals in a population with others who share a common set of characteristics. A screening test will not give a detailed profile of individual strengths and weaknesses. It will serve to flag up the need for further assessment.

Some providers have concerns about when to use which kind of tool to assess different learners. There can be uncertainty about when to look at basic skills, when to look at key skills. Although literacy and numeracy skills underpin key skills, and there is a continuum from basic into key skills, it is really a question of level. You will need to base your decision on information that comes through with the learner, for example, previous qualifications, school reports, records of achievement.

Where a learner has no evidence of early achievement in literacy or numeracy, or has evidence of performance in GCSE at grade D or below in Mathematics and English, it will be helpful to look at reading, writing and number skills. You may find that some learners have gone through a Basic Skills Screening test with Connexions or Job Centre Plus and this has indicated a need for further assessment. In all these cases you could use initial assessment materials from the Basic Skills Agency to help you determine levels of reading, writing and numeracy. It is not appropriate to use assessment tools designed for use with learners who are at level 1 or below with those who have a GCSE grade profile of C and above in Maths and English. These learners have already demonstrated literacy and numeracy skills at a level equivalent to level 2 in the National Qualifications Framework.

Where learners demonstrate achievement equivalent to level 2 you may use a key skills screening tool to:

- inform decisions about the key skill level to be achieved through the learning programme
- signal where diagnostic assessment is needed to identify individual strengths and needs
- indicate where specialist assessment of learning difficulties or disabilities might be needed
- contribute to aggregate data to use for strategic planning

I hope you will be able to print from the disk the ~nole of aggregate data from Lewisham College. could you use this kind of data in your own nisation for the benefit of your learners?

Identifying individual strengths and learning needs

Diagnostic tests, tasks and activities should provide details of individual strengths and weaknesses. They are usually administered during induction. The outcomes can be used to shape the detail of an individual learning programme. They should inform the support needed to help the learner build on his/her strengths and overcome weaknesses. Some learners who need specialist testing for specific learning difficulties can identify themselves at this stage or even later.

The video clips give you an insight into a range of approaches that have been successful in helping learners achieve. It is important that there is no stigma attached to learning support or those who need it. What strategies do you use and how effective are they for your learners?

Assessing and responding to learning styles

Learning styles inventories will tell your learners about the ways they will learn best. Outcomes can be used in different ways. Knowledge of learning preferences can help learners exploit opportunities to learn through activities that match well with preferred style. But there should also be support for learners to learn when teaching/training strategies do not match well with preferred learning style.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Look at the way that learners and staff at Middlesbrough College use information from a learning styles inventory to secure more effective learning. You can print out documentation developed by staff at Middlesbrough to help form a more detailed picture of the ways in which the practice supports learners and their learning. How does this relate to your own practice?

A holistic approach

Now is not the time to attempt to go into a lot of detail about different tests. The important thing is that where they are used they are well chosen and fit for purpose. An individual test provides one source of information. It needs to be pulled together with information drawn from different sources so that the learner and provider can see the whole picture when decisions are made about learning and support. The learner's own view of their interest, ability and needs may bring a different but important perspective.

How do you and colleagues triangulate evidence from across the process to form a basis for decisions?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Management: how consistent is your process across your organisation?

Consistency

Consistency is a key management issue. This is particularly so for large organisations with dispersed provision or those that have several different areas of learning. Consistency is best demonstrated when the process is equally effective for each individual learner. It can be judged to be effective when it helps secure the best match between the learner and the learning. For each individual it should initiate feelings of confidence in their ability to achieve through a programme that offers learning opportunities, and support, of a level and kind to match aspirations, aptitude, ability and needs. It can seem so simple but evidence from inspections has shown it to be difficult to achieve.

Consistency is about the process and the learner's experience of that process. It is not about using the same initial assessment tools or tests at the same time with all learners. To improve consistency you will need to focus first on the process and look at what needs to happen, where and when it should happen, who needs to make it happen and whether or not the people involved have the understanding skills and assessment tools to be effective in their roles?

Explore the learner experiences witnessed through the video clips on the CD-ROM. What do these tell you about the consistency of the quality of the initial assessment processes? What does this tell you about your own practice?

Staff confidence and competence

Staff need to feel confident and be competent to fulfil their roles within the initial assessment process. They need to understand what they are doing and how what they do can benefit the learner. There needs to be clarity about how one person's role relates to that of others, with clear channels of communication and information flow.

Training to improve understanding of purpose, process, structures and systems can be cost effective if managed at whole organisation or large group level. The development of skills to interview, mark and interpret tests, analyse a range of information from different sources and give feedback are likely to be most

successful on a smaller group basis with opportunities to practise skills as a feature of the sessions. In the case of some specialist assessment instruments, staff will need to achieve qualified status to administer tests.

What do you learn from the video clips on the CD-ROM about the understanding and skills of staff? How can you use your learning to improve your own practice?

Standardised administrative systems

Where standardised administrative systems can be set up it will be possible to capture and record data from a variety of different sources. It will be helpful to involve a range of staff in the development of such systems so that colleagues working at all levels across different sites can feel a sense of ownership for a common approach. Ideally information systems will provide opportunities to use data both for the benefit of individuals and their learning, and also at a strategic level to inform longer term planning and resourcing decisions.

What sort of information is captured and recorded by providers that feature in the CD-ROM? How do you see the information used to benefit learners? How do you use your own data to benefit learners?

Quality assurance

Continuous review and evaluation of initial assessment processes will help your organisation monitor its practice and improve it where needed. Ideally, you will build in quality systems from the beginning. It will be important to seek the views of learners through learner feedback mechanisms as soon as possible after the experience. Questionnaires, group discussions or individual interviews can be used to collect data. Staff and partner organisations can also provide valuable feedback on how they have found the processes.

Listen to learners reflecting on their experiences and understandings in different video clips. If your own learners had similar views how could you use the information to help improve practice?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Provider Case Studies

Huddersfield New College

Background

Huddersfield New College was established as a sixth form college in 1974 following a local reorganisation. It is one of two sixth form colleges in the town. There are also two general further education colleges and 16 schools with sixth forms within 10 miles of the college. It draws the majority of its students from the borough of Kirklees which is a vibrant multi-cultural community. Recruitment in 2001 was 1358 students. The college aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and courses are offered at level 1, 2 and 3. All are supplemented by a variety of enhancement and enrichment activities.

Learner experience

The college puts a high priority on helping learners feel comfortable in the college and confident that they can be successful. You will see and hear on the video clips a number of learners who are moving in to programmes at level 2 and level 3 at the college. By witnessing their experience you will be able to learn something of their interview experience. You will also be able to find out about later stages of learner assessment and the ways in which this informs learning. Support for leaning is clearly seen in a positive light, part of an entitlement to extend and develop skills rather than as part of a deficit model with associated stigma attached.

Scope: comprehensiveness

All learners have an admissions interview with a member of the senior management team. The interview offers an opportunity to explore, with each learner, evidence of interest, aptitude and predicted performance in GCSE. It is interesting to note the way in which the college actively pursues written evidence of earlier learning. The interview is used to determine the likely level of study for each learner.

I hadn't been to an interview before... a bit worried. I could get turned down. They could say "no we don't want you"

Deepak from Huddersfield New College

Further assessment takes place through induction. Learners complete a written task through tutorial. The outcomes are used to indicate where learners may benefit from support with writing/language skills. The same assessment task is used with all learners. Support specialists centrally mark it and the outcomes are fed back to individuals by tutors. Subject specialists use induction assignments specific to their own areas to identify a profile of skills and needs for individuals in relation to the demands of their programme. Outcomes are fed back to learners by subject staff but information is made available to the tutor.

Time is given to allow for the learners to settle into their new environment. After four to six weeks each learner has an individual review session with his or her tutor. This offers opportunities to check out ability to cope and progress with the programme. Information from the induction task and the subject specific assessment is considered alongside evidence of progress in the mainstream programme.

Where it is clear that a learner will benefit from support with their learning they are actively encouraged to go along to the Study Centre. Mainstream subject staff are timetabled in to the Study Centre with specialist staff. The centre has a positive image with learners. Attendance at the Study Centre is regularly monitored and subject staff review learner progress with those who attend.

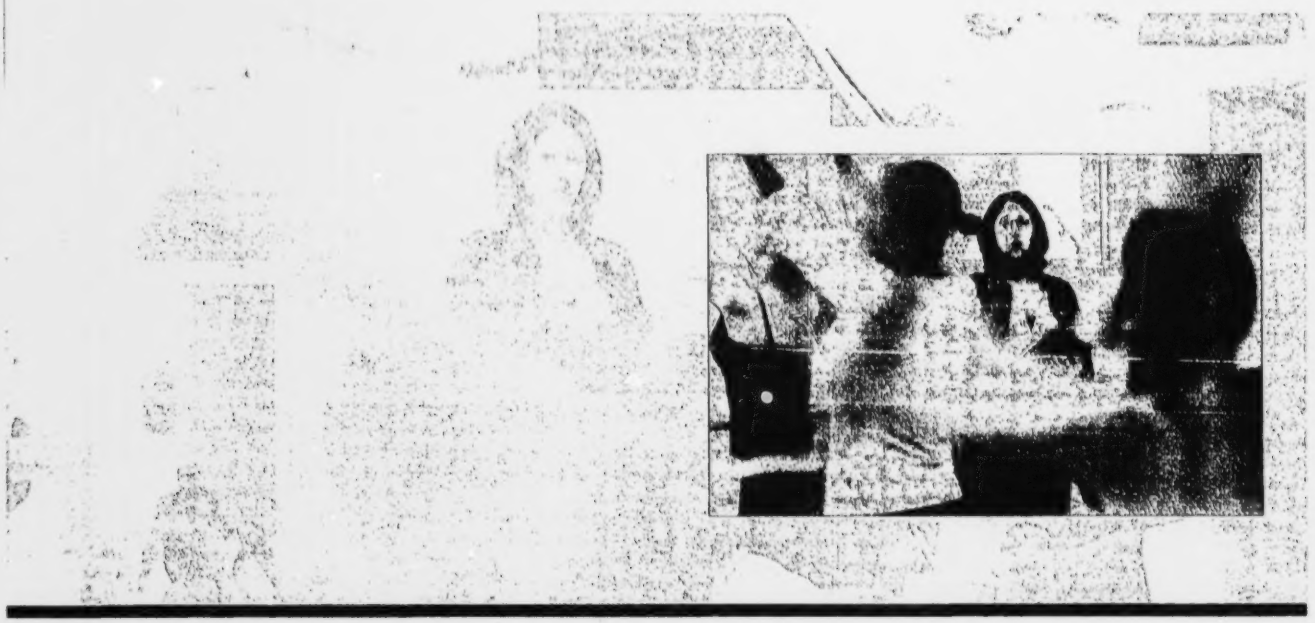
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Management

There is a common set of administrative procedures in place with standardised documentation for collecting and recording data relating to interviews and the whole college assessment of writing and literacy skills. All subject areas use induction assignments to determine a profile of skills for individual learners but the shape and form of these differs according to the level and nature of the subjects to be studied.

Feedback from learners is collected and used to inform quality improvement of both assessment and support.
Documentation from Huddersfield can be viewed or downloaded from the CD-ROM:

- Invitation to interview
- Guidance notes: preliminary admissions interview
- CDAR
- IDAR



Lewisham College

Background

Lewisham College is a large general further education (FE) college in the London borough of Lewisham. It has two sites: the long-established campus on Lewisham Way, close to the centre of Lewisham, and a newer campus in nearby Deptford, which opened in 1996. Lewisham College provides courses in all the areas of learning funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Most are vocational courses. In 2000/01, the college had 12,840 students, of whom 80% were aged 19 or over. The average age of students was 29. Some 31% of all students studied full time, 43% part time and 26% in the evenings only. The largest proportion, 37%, studied at entry level or for qualifications at level 1, 31% studied at level 2 and 33% at levels 3 and 4, or above. Some 52% of students were male. Students from minority ethnic groups comprised 60% of the student body.

Initial assessment at Lewisham College seeks to inform decisions about the kind of programme, the level of programme and any individual support that may be needed.

The learner experience

Through the video clips in the CD-ROM you will meet a number of learners from Lewisham College. Learners represent a variety of programmes and are working toward qualifications at different levels. You will catch "stolen moments" from interviews. You will see and hear learners talk about key skills screening tests and you will be able to observe learners enjoying induction activities designed to introduce them to their area of learning and identify important information about them as individuals. You will hear learners talk about how information from assessment is fed back to them by tutors and used as a basis for what they learn and how they learn it.

Scope: comprehensiveness

Initial interviews are designed to make the best match between the learner and the programme of study/work to be followed. All programme teams have identified the aptitudes, attitudes and skills needed for success in their areas and have set out clear criteria for entry. The interview seeks out evidence that the learner meets the entry criteria. Practical tasks give additional rigour to the process. For example, Engineering use a manual task to explore the learner's ability to follow written instructions to sequence actions and complete a practical job. In the video you will see auditions for places in a different vocational area, dance.

They are honest, they're really honest, they tell you "This is good. This is very bad. Work on it." They give us hope.

Eva from Lewisham College

All learners do a key skills screening test at entry to determine the level at which they will work. The test is done on-line. Test items have been taken from those developed through QCA and used by awarding bodies in key skills external tests. The outcomes of testing at this point are seen as an indicator of current performance and are used alongside other assessment information to inform any decisions about an individual learner.

Aggregate data from screening is collected and used to inform strategic planning across the college. This year the information has shown that many learners entering trade and craft areas are below level 1 at entry but that the profile of learners applying for level 3 programmes is improving. This information has been used to make decisions about allocations of support. You can find out more about this by viewing the documents on the CD-ROM.

Further assessment is done through induction tasks and activities. These are developed by programme teams, supported appropriately by key skills co-ordinators. All are vocationally relevant and give the learners an early insight

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

into the programme they have chosen to follow. They provide a more detailed profile of skills and needs than earlier forms of assessment.

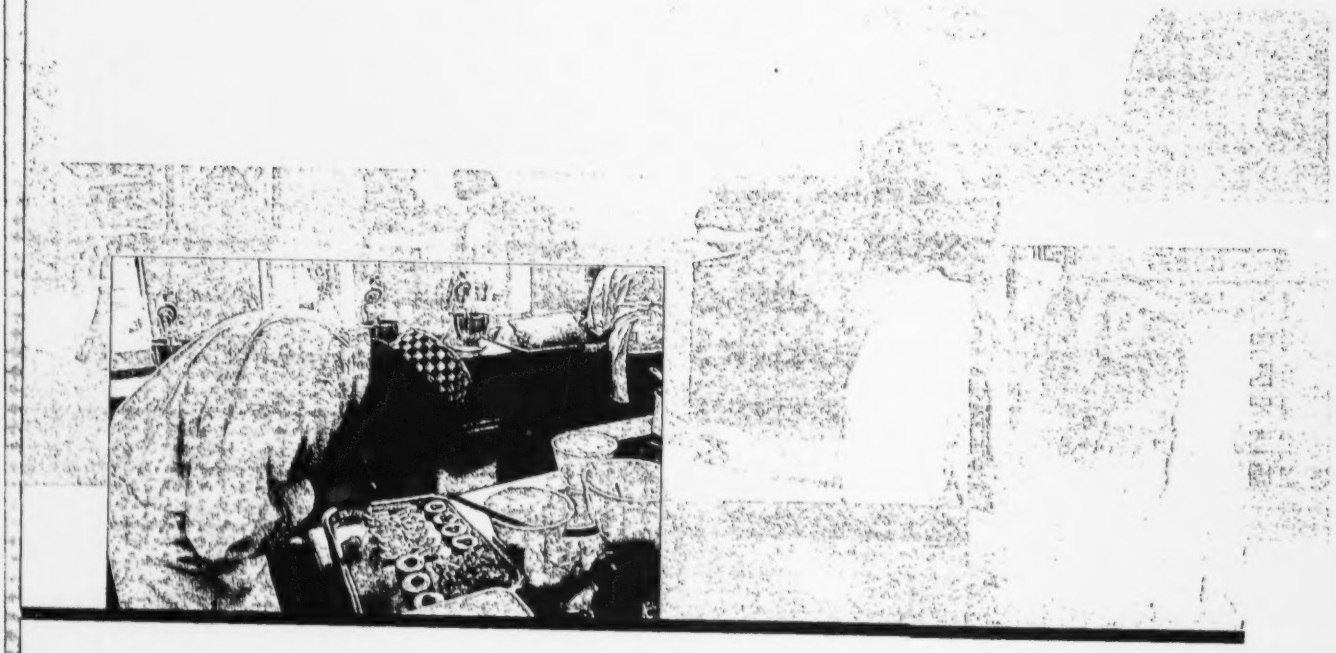
The outcomes of all assessment is fed back to learners by tutors. Information is used holistically to detail the individual learning plan. On level 1 programmes a high priority is given to skill development. In some areas this can mean as much as 50% of the learning time is focused on key skills, 50% on vocational work. On higher level programmes learners needing help will be supported through Skills Upgrade. The image of support provision is recognised as being critically important to take up. Much support is integrated into programme areas with specialist support staff working in partnership with vocational colleagues to plan, implement and monitor support.

Management

A senior manager has overall responsibility for initial assessment but operational management is delegated to programme teams. All learners are assessed at entry though an interview, screening and induction activities. The focus of the assessment and the tools and techniques used can differ to meet the specific needs of learners and the programmes they want to follow. Central guidance is available to provide for flexibility within a common framework. The framework seeks to secure consistency in the quality of the process.

Documentation from Lewisham can viewed or downloaded from the CD-ROM:

- Course entry criteria and initial assessment
- Assessment in induction
- Aggregate data from key skills screening tests



Middlesbrough College

Background

Middlesbrough College is a newly established college formed on 1 August, 2002 as a result of a merger between Middlesbrough College and Teeside Tertiary College. It is now one of the largest tertiary colleges in the country. The college provides courses in all areas of learning. The current enrolment is 3,383 full-time learners and 10,595 part-time learners. 10,841 learners are over eighteen. The college provides courses from entry through to level 3 in most vocational areas. There are opportunities for distance learning and work based learning. The college collaborates with the University of Teeside with several HNC/D programmes and Foundation Degrees. The college works with local schools as part of Excellence in Cities project.

Learner experience

Through the video clips on the CD-ROM you can find out what level 2 and level 3 learners in Catering and Health and Social Care know about their learning preferences. Learners talk positively about their learning and demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which their learning preferences can effect the

way they learn. They also show how knowledge of their peer's learning styles can be used to good effect to develop individuals through group work. Discussion in individual progress reviews centres more around learning since learners have become more confident to talk about the ways in which they learn best.

We found out which were our strongest points and what were our weakest and we put them on graphs and put them on the wall.

Georgina from Middlesbrough College

Scope: comprehensiveness

Information about learning preferences comes from the learner's response to questions on a questionnaire. This is administered during induction. It can be done on-line. It is interesting to note that learners call it a questionnaire and do not refer to it as a test. They seem to have enjoyed their experience and are positive about it.

The assessment of learning preferences is one part of an extended assessment process that also looks, where appropriate, at basic skills and/or key skills. The assessment of basic skills and learning styles is done by course tutors. Key skills assessment is carried out by key skills specialists.

The outcomes of assessment are fed back to individuals and are used appropriately by the course tutor and other colleagues to plan learning for individuals and for the group. When the outcomes indicate a need for formal diagnostic testing it will be done through the learning support co-ordinator.

Management

Initial assessment is managed across the college through curriculum areas. Each curriculum area has in the region of 600 learners and 10-12 members of staff. This college's work on learning preferences is co-ordinated across the college by a Learning Preferences Co-ordinator who works through Learning Preferences Champions who are allocated to specific curriculum areas. Learning Champions offer on-going support to staff as they plan their teaching to respond to information about their learners.

Classroom observation offers an opportunity to monitor and feedback to staff on the ways in which teaching is responding to the needs of individual learners. Learning Mentors fulfil the role of observer in this context. Champions and Mentors work closely with Tutorial Co-ordinators to regularly review practice and build support to secure the maximum opportunity for development relating to teaching and learning issues.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Staff training sessions have been used to introduce the assessment of learning styles to staff. These sessions offer opportunities for colleagues to support each other in developing schemes of work. This process has allowed them to identify where particular strategies need to be used to develop learning preferences.

Documentation from Middlesbrough can be viewed or downloaded from the CD-ROM:

- A tutor guide to learning preferences
- Appendix 5: a range of teaching and learning methods
- Checklist for developing learning preferences in my teaching
- Draft report: lesson observations of learning mentors

South Nottingham College

Background

South Nottingham College is a General Further Education College, with provision from entry level to level 4. The college operates from 2 main sites and also has several satellite bases in the city and local community. It has approximately 1,800 full-time and 21,000 part-time students. The college is recognised as a major provider for vocational education and training in Art & Design, Print, Photography, Media, Trade Union Studies, Sport, Leisure and Recreation, Service Industries, Hair and Beauty and Care. It is designated a Centre of Vocational Excellence by the Secretary of State for Education for the provision of Digital Imaging, Photography and Print. It successfully recruits students who have not traditionally entered Further Education or training. The college is proud of the way it supports learners with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Learner experience

The learners you see on video from South Nottingham College are learners who have learning difficulties or disabilities. They all present a very positive picture of themselves and their ability to learn. It is clear that they have understood the purpose of initial assessment and that they value the support that has been identified and offered as a result of assessment.

Scope: comprehensiveness

This case study focuses on the assessment of learners who have learning difficulties or disabilities. It looks at the scope and comprehensiveness of the process for this particular cohort of learners.

The college is proactive and positive in marketing an inclusive approach to learning for those who have learning difficulties or disabilities. A lot of work is done to build strong relationships with earlier providers of learning or training. This helps with information flow and offers staff opportunities to begin to get to know learners before they actually arrive in the college. Where a learner is transferring from a local school the college will seek the learner's consent to request the transfer of all records from the school. This can include things like Educational Psychologist's reports, records of classroom support, progress reports and records of achievement.

Learners can themselves identify their need for support well in advance of their arrival. After completing name and address sections of the college application form the form offers an early opportunity for them to signal that they have a need for support. The nature of needs will always be checked out further through contact with an earlier provider of learning or an individual interview and specialist testing.

The college runs specialist diagnostic tests to provide a detailed individual profile for learners who are:

- Deaf
- Visually impaired
- Dyslexic
- Experiencing physical disabilities/medical needs
- Demonstrating significant behavioural difficulties
- Experiencing mental health difficulties

The college aims to use the information generated to secure support for the individual in mainstream provision. This year they have been able to do this for over 200 learners, with a further 60 supported through discrete provision.

Management

The Learning Support manager has a whole organisation responsibility for specialist support. There is an extended team of staff who go in to curriculum areas to work alongside mainstream colleges to provide help for targeted individuals. The team includes 30 learning support assistants, 12 specialist support staff (includes five dyslexia tutors each with different subject specialist

knowledge), ten communication workers, one mental health specialist, a visiting psychologist and nurse.

A key strength of the model is in the relationships between teams. Specialists meet every six weeks to review and plan provision. All work to a common set of protocols. All are keen to secure a rigorous and professional approach and have this year been using feedback from observation of their practice to plan for improvement. There is also regular contact between those who offer specialist support and curriculum specialists. For organisations that are at the beginning of their journey to offer specialist support the college advises a slow and careful start.

In the case of South Nottingham, they chose to adopt an incremental approach. They started from a position of strength by preparing to move high quality support for the deaf or dyslexic out in to curriculum areas. Specialist staff worked first with mainstream colleagues who were more confident in their ability to learn to cope. Together, they looked at applications and made decisions about how they would work to ensure the success of their learners. Gradually the college extended the range of specialist support and the number of curriculum areas taking learners diagnosed as needing it.

In all cases the support offered is tailored to the needs of the individual and the demands of the programme. As it has been found to work, learners and staff have grown in confidence and the college is able to use its good practice to help extend boundaries and bring in more curriculum areas, more specialist needs.

A central feature of the provision is the individual review process. These reviews offer regular opportunities for learners to look at their progress with their mainstream and specialist support tutors. The outcomes of the reviews very much inform the detailed nature of the support provision. It is often unique to an individual learner. For example it could be help with research in the library, it could be communication in an art workshop. Look at the video clips and see where you can see evidence of this kind of support.

Documentation from South Nottingham College can be viewed or downloaded from the CD-ROM:

- Information for course teams
- Support review – students
- Support review – staff
- Support review – support staff

I was feeling nervous. I was hoping that support would be there at college. When I arrived I had a tutorial and an interview.

Paul from South Nottingham College

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Improving initial assessment

a checklist

You can use the checklist to record your strengths and areas for development.

Key: A : Well developed practice
B : Practice which has some strengths but needs further development
C : Practice which needs much development and support.

Learner experience : how learner centred is your process?	**Circle one**
Learners have a clear understanding of the purpose of initial assessment	A B C
Learners understand how and when they will be assessed and what they can gain from the process	A B C
Learners are engaged in the assessment process, they feel that assessment is done with them rather than to them	A B C
Learners receive feedback from initial assessment	A B C
Feedback is positive and helps learners feel confident that they will be successful in their learning programme	A B C
Learners are able to use the outcomes of initial assessment to help them understand their learning	A B C
Learners are encouraged to discuss their learning and support needs as they are supported in drawing up an Individual Learning Plan	A B C
Learners use knowledge of strengths and weaknesses to set their own short term learning targets that are challenging, specific, achievable and time related	A B C
Learners have opportunities to review their progress and set new targets	A B C
Learners are given support where initial assessment and reviews identify needs	A B C
Scope : how comprehensive is your Initial Assessment?	
Information is sought and used from earlier experiences of learning: schools, employers, careers	A B C
Learners are themselves invited to assess their interests, ability, aptitude and potential	A B C
Assessment tools and tasks that are used to help provide a more detailed picture are fit for purpose	A B C

Care is taken in selecting assessment tools to secure valid and reliable information	A	B	C
Care is taken to avoid the overuse of tests	A	B	C
Aptitude tests and tasks are used to identify areas of interest and potential	A	B	C
Screening/initial assessment tools are used only to identify a need for further assessment or "levels" of performance and are not over interpreted in terms of specific individual needs	A	B	C
Diagnostic tools and tasks are used to identify specific strengths and areas for development in relation to programme demands	A	B	C
Learning styles inventories are used to identify learning preferences	A	B	C
Specialist assessment tools are used to identify specific learning needs	A	B	C
The outcomes of different kinds of initial assessment are used together, and with the learner, to look at the whole picture to inform what is learnt, how it is learnt and how the learner is supported	A	B	C
Management : how consistent is your process?			
Staff understand the purpose of initial assessment in terms of learner gains	A	B	C
Staff understand the initial assessment process	A	B	C
The timing of different elements of the process is linked to purpose	A	B	C
Tools and techniques used are fit for purpose: tests and tasks used provide the specific information that is needed	A	B	C
Staff understand the role they play in the process and the ways in which their role relates to others	A	B	C
Staff training helps them feel confident and competent in their role	A	B	C
Staff understand and use a range of information from different assessment activities to inform decisions about individual learners and their learning	A	B	C
Aggregate data is collected and used to inform organisational planning for learning and support	A	B	C
Monitoring and review systems are used to good effect to improve the process	A	B	C

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank three groups of people who have played a part in putting together this book. Firstly, the providers who opened their doors to us and our film crew:-

Huddersfield New College
Lewisham College
Middlesbrough College
South Nottingham College

Secondly, I would like to thank the members of a reference group who informed our early thinking about this work:-

Philip Barker	Connexions
John Bradbury	Rathbone Training
Jenny Burnette	LSDA: Director, Curriculum
Lynne Clough	Consultant
John Gray	South Notts College
Penny Hope	DDI Training Limited
Liz Lawson	DfES: Basic Skills Strategy Unit
Theresa Leaning	Solihull Sixth Form College
Julian Marshall	BDP Media
Clare McDermott	Hastings College of Arts and Technology
Simon Morris	Herts Careers Service
Liz Perry	Consultant
Vikki Smith	LSDA: DA – RQA
Jane Sowerby	Basic Skills Agency
Judith Woodlock	LSDA: DA - Basic Skills
Chris Woodrow	Huddersfield New College
Ned Worsley	Consultant
Sandra Young	Somerset County Training

Thirdly I want to offer thanks to Julian Marshall and colleagues at BDP Media . Julian, as BDP's Project Manager, worked closely with case study colleges to film practice. He provided ideas and expertise for the design and production of the attached CD-ROM.

Appendix

Assessing basic skills at entry to post–16 provision

Background

The introduction of the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy allow providers to identify literacy, numeracy and language skill levels more accurately and consistently. All adult literacy, numeracy and language screening and assessment should be based on the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy. Assessment should inform the development and review of individual learning plans.

Assessment Processes

The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit uses the following terms to describe assessment at entry to post–16 provision:

- **Screening**

Basic Skills Screening is used to identify learners who would benefit from more in-depth assessment. A screening tool has been developed, Fast Track, and is available from the Basic Skills Agency. Versions are being developed for work place settings and community settings. A screening tool for ESOL is also being developed.

- **Initial Assessment**

Learners may have different levels of reading, writing, numeracy and language need. Initial Assessment tools can identify skills and levels and will help to place learners in the most appropriate learning programmes. These tools are available from the Basic Skills Agency.

- **Diagnostic assessment**

Diagnostic assessment materials can help to identify a detailed profile of skills and weaknesses. Diagnostic assessment materials have been recently developed. Diagnostic assessment must be carried out by a literacy, numeracy or ESOL specialist with level 4 qualifications.

To order a free copy of the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy, contact the DfES publications on 0845 6022260 or by email: dfes@prolog.uk.com.

Free copies of the adult ESOL core curriculum, the adult literacy and numeracy core curricula, the pre-Entry curriculum framework and Access for All are available from: The Basic Skills Agency, Admail 524, London WC1A 1BR. Tel: 0870 6002400 Fax: 0870 6002401 Email: basicskills@twoten.press.net Basic Skills Agency website at www.basic-skills.co.uk

To order screening (Fast Track) and initial assessment materials, contact the Basic Skills Agency orderline on 0870 600 2400. For advice on diagnostic assessment, contact the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit on 0207 273 1223 or visit the website on www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/teachingandlearning

Using the CD-ROM

System requirements

Microsoft Windows 95/98/2000/NT/XP
Intel Pentium 166 processor
32 MB RAM
800x 600 resolution at 16 bit (thousands of colours)
8 x speed CD-ROM drive
Mouse or touch pad
16 bit audio card with headphone or speakers
Windows Media Player

Instructions

Insert the disc into the CD-ROM drive.
The programme should start automatically.
If it does not start automatically:
1. Click on Start
2. Select Run
3. In the box type D:\LSDA.exe (where D is your CD-ROM drive letter)
4. Click OK

Disclaimer
CD-ROMS protective liability statement.
Although the is CD-ROM has been thoroughly tested at all stages of production, it is advisable to use a virus checker on any software before running it. The Learning and Skills Development Agency does not accept any responsibility or any loss, disruption or damage to your data and /or computer system which may occur while using either the disc or the programmes and data on it.
Reproduction of any part of the content of this CD-ROM is not authorised without the expressed written permission of the Learning and Skills Development Agency. Although the LSDA attempts to ensure accuracy of the disc's contents it accepts no responsibility for any omissions or inadvertent errors. Nothing in this paragraph shall affect your statutory rights.

Video sequences

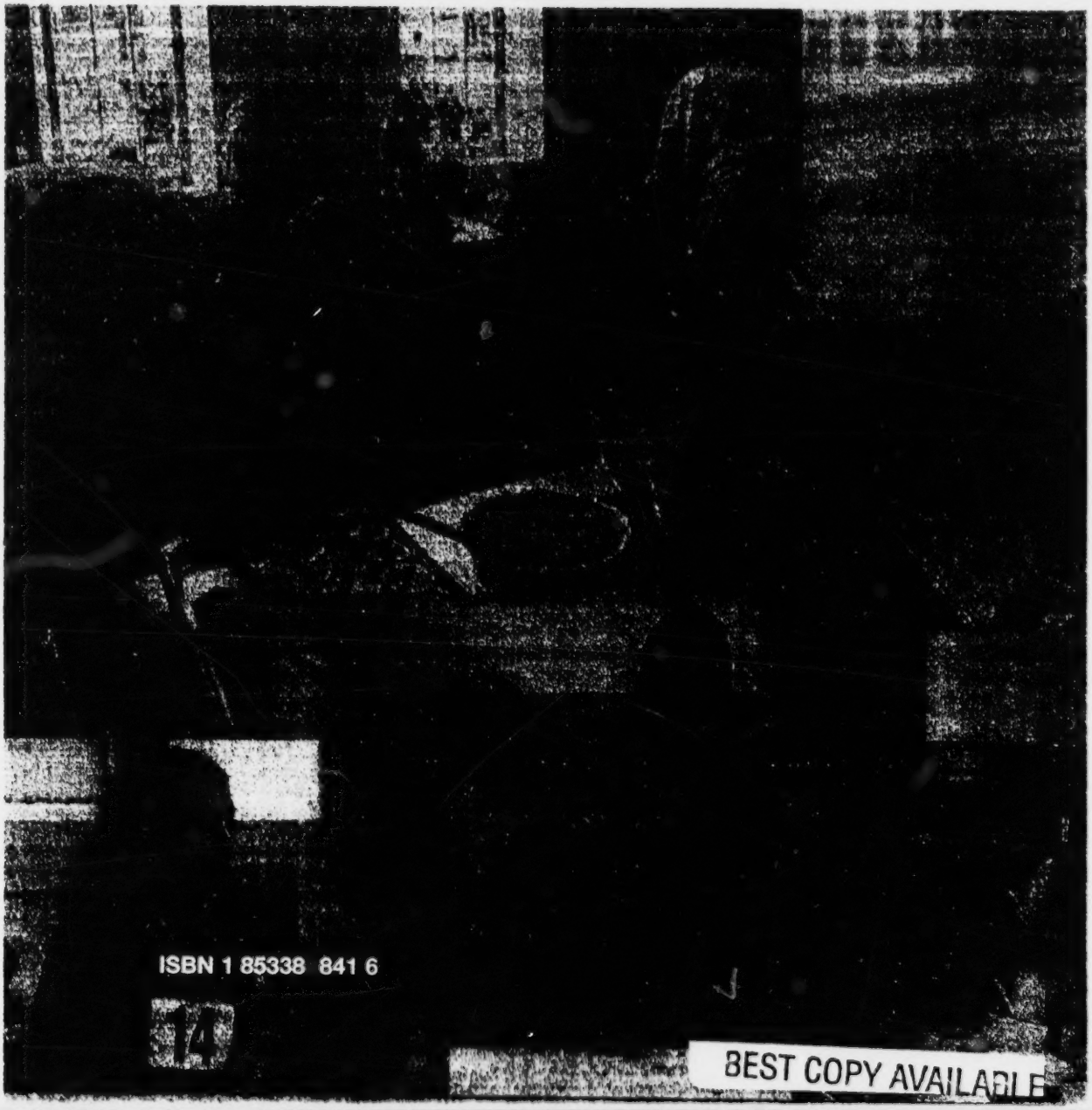
The CD-ROM uses MPEG-1 video sequences.
To play these sequences your machine needs Windows Media Player installed. This is likely to be installed already. Windows Media Player can be downloaded from www.microsoft.com

Printable materials

For many of the case studies shown in the video sequences and mentioned here in this booklet there are some accompanying documents. These can be viewed and printed from the disc. You can access these via 'view documents' on screen.

Alternatively you can view these documents without running the disc by opening the documents folder in the disc directory.

raising quality
and achievement
programme



ISBN 1 85338 841 6

14

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Improving initial assessment: a checklist

You can use the checklist to record your strengths and areas for development.

Key: **A**: Well developed practice

B: Practice, which has some strengths but needs further development

C: Practice, which needs much development and support.

Learner experience: how learner centred is your process?	Please select		
	A	B	C
Learners have a clear understanding of the purpose of initial assessment	☐	☐	☐
Learners understand how and when they will be assessed and what they can gain from the process	☐	☐	☐
Learners are engaged in the assessment process, they feel that assessment is done with them rather than to them	☐	☐	☐
Learners receive feedback from initial assessment	☐	☐	☐
Feedback is positive and helps learners feel confident that they will be successful in their learning programme	☐	☐	☐
Learners are able to use the outcomes of initial assessment to help them understand their learning	☐	☐	☐
Learners are encouraged to discuss their learning and support needs as they are supported in drawing up an Individual Learning Plan	☐	☐	☐
Learners use knowledge of strengths and weaknesses to set their own short term learning targets that are challenging, specific, achievable and time related	☐	☐	☐
Learners have opportunities to review their progress and set new targets	☐	☐	☐
Learners are given support where initial assessment and reviews identify needs	☐	☐	☐

Management: how consistent is your process?	Please select		
	A	B	C
Staff understand the purpose of initial assessment in terms of learner gains	☐	☐	☐
Staff understand the initial assessment process	☐	☐	☐
The timing of different elements of the process is linked to purpose	☐	☐	☐
Tools and techniques used are fit for purpose: tests and tasks used provide the specific information that is needed	☐	☐	☐
Staff understand the role they play in the process and the ways in which their role relates to others	☐	☐	☐
Staff training helps them feel confident and competent in their role	☐	☐	☐
Staff understand and use a range of information from different assessment activities to inform decisions about individual learners and their learning	☐	☐	☐
Aggregate data is collected and used to inform organisational planning for learning and support	☐	☐	☐
Monitoring and review systems are used to good effect to improve the process	☐	☐	☐

Scope: how comprehensive is your Initial Assessment?	Please select		
	A	B	C
Information is sought and used from earlier experiences of learning: schools, employers, careers	☐	☐	☐
Learners are themselves invited to assess their interests, ability, aptitude and potential	☐	☐	☐
Assessment tools and tasks that are used to help provide a more detailed picture are fit for purpose	☐	☐	☐
Care is taken in selecting assessment tools to secure valid and reliable information	☐	☐	☐
Care is taken to avoid the overuse of tests	☐	☐	☐
Aptitude tests and tasks are used to identify areas of interest and potential	☐	☐	☐
Screening/initial assessment tools are used only to identify a need for further assessment or "levels" of performance and are not over interpreted in terms of specific individual needs	☐	☐	☐
Diagnostic tools and tasks are used to identify specific strengths and areas for development in relation to programme demands	☐	☐	☐
Learning styles inventories are used to identify learning preferences	☐	☐	☐
Specialist assessment tools are used to identify specific learning needs	☐	☐	☐
The outcomes of different kinds of initial assessment are used together, and with the learner, to look at the whole picture to inform what is learnt, how it is learnt and how the learner is supported	☐	☐	☐

Our Ref: PF/BJD

November 2002

Dear

Thank you for your application to attend New College. I should be pleased if you would come for a discussion concerning your possible course on .....

If this is inconvenient please telephone the office to arrange another time.

We will not be able to offer you a definite place at New College until we have seen some record of your previous study at school or college therefore you should bring your Record of Achievement, Year 11 report or other such documents with you.

Please report to the main Reception.

Yours sincerely

Principal

PRELIMINARY ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW

- The interview should obviously be informal, so as to put the potential student at ease, but most applicants see the interview as a serious matter and will be expecting a range of questions.

- The majority will bring a Record of Achievement or a set of Reports. Please show an interest in these. Some of them will include estimated grades, nearly all contain information of attendance and interests. They can provide useful topics for a brief informal discussion at the beginning of the interview on hobbies/interests/work placements, etc.

- Indicate subject preference order (if any). If an Advanced course discuss and record Year 2 intentions.

- Please make clear on the interview form the most probable course the student will follow. Discuss combinations in a positive way. **If predicted more than 5 GCSEs at grade C or above including maths and English** discuss 4 options. Explain that actual requirement is 5 AS levels in year one reducing to 3 A levels in year two. The fifth option will be General Studies covered in tutorials. The 4 AS subjects should cover preferences leading to career aims (if known) plus subjects to show breadth. Indicate Career aim on interview form if known or areas of interest.
  If predicted grades 5 GCSEs at grade C or above not including maths and/or English explain they should work towards 5AS + English or Maths GCSE. 1 AS will be General Studies which is covered in tutorial.
  If predicted 4 GCSEs at grade C explain that this is borderline and they should seriously consider an intermediate programme for 1 year to consolidate (inc Eng/Maths where appropriate) so they can have a full choice the following year. Alternatively they could take 2/3 advanced course + 2/3 GCSEs with view to adding another AS in year 2. However this will limit options for progression.

- If GCSE maths predicted grade is less than D students will study maths over 2 year, covering under-pinning skills in year 1 and GCSE in year 2.

- If an applicant is applying for a place on an intermediate or foundation level programme explain that this is part of a three or four year route to advanced level qualifications and discuss progress implications.

- Discuss enhancement and Key Skills. All students have access to the enhancement programme with/without qualifications. Refer to enhancement booklet. Explain that further information on courses and enhancement is available on Welcome Day for students who accept places. All students work towards Key skills at a level depending on course and qualifications

- Places on the foundation programme are limited and schools will be asked for further information relating to motivation, attendance, etc. before a place can be offered. This has implications for students applying for intermediate programmes whose estimated grades suggest they are more likely to be foundation students. Such students should not be offered a guaranteed place at interview but are contacted once details have been received from their school. There may even be a few pupils applying for advanced programmes who you feel are being totally unrealistic and may need additional guidance. If this is the case please refer to the following staff

- For applicants from Calderdale, Colne Valley, North Kirklees, Holme Valley and Newsome mention the bus service.

- Give the applicant the opportunity to ask additional questions.

- Check whether or not the applicant came to an Open Evening and/or Year 10 day - if not he/she may like to tour the College (students are usually willing to take someone on a tour). If there is time you may like to ask the applicant (and parent if present) what they thought about the Open Evening.

- Unless you have serious doubts about the applicant or they are applying for a foundation course (see above) inform him/her that a letter offering a place will be sent out in a few days time. Ask the applicant to return the reply slip indicating whether the place is being accepted or not. Remind about Welcome Day and explain they will also have an appointment time for after GCSE results. Where appropriate explain they would attend regardless of results as a most appropriate course will be agreed at that time.

- **If in doubt about a candidate refer to ..... or a Faculty Manager. In some cases the applicant's school is contacted for further information.**

- Please complete the interview record sheet. If a transfer form from the school is attached to the application form there is no need to copy out the estimated grades but if not please indicate whether the grades have been obtained from an ROA or report ie. whether evidence was produced. Add a comment for the letter Return the application and record sheet to the office as soon as possible.

- If a student fails to provide evidence of estimated grades, motivation, etc from his/her school in the form of a Record of Achievement or a report of offer of a place will be **conditional** on he/she producing such evidence, along with GCSEs results, at his/her enrolment interview. A special letter has been produced to cover this situation and should be used instead of the standard letter of offer.

- Please ask applicants if they plan to apply elsewhere. If they do, inform them that within the agreement between the Huddersfield Colleges, dual acceptances are not permitted. Suggest that students have a look at alternatives if they wish but then encourage them to make a decision.

- Once applicants have decided that New College is their first choice they should return the reply slip as soon as possible. The deadline for return of these slips is the end of April.

EXAMPLES OF INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Your choice of A levels Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics is a good one for your proposed career in electrical engineering. We discussed the possibility of you studying AS Electronics or taking up your interest in Information Technology in the Key Programme.

Your choice at A levels English Literature, Modern History and Law is a good combination of subjects which will provide you with the skills and knowledge required to study a degree in Law at University. You eventually intend to pursue a career in commerce and we discussed the importance of you maintaining a knowledge of a foreign language. I outlined the wide range of choices available in the Key Programme and you are considering taking GNVQ Business French alongside your main studies.

You would like to study A level Mathematics, Chemistry and Biology and would eventually like to become a medical laboratory technician. We discussed your expected grades at GCSE and you are going to consider GNVQ Science Advanced or Intermediate level as an alternative to studying A levels. You do not need to make a final decision until after you have received your results in August but whatever grades you achieve New College has a wide range of courses for you to choose from.

Although you have no clear career ambitions at the moment, your choice of A levels in ..... would give you a range of options. We discussed the possibility of a re-take in maths GCSE if you are unfortunate not to obtain the Grade C which is desirable.

Cross-College Diagnostic Assessment Recording Sheet

Student Name: ..... Tutor Group: .....

Level of Study: ☞ Advanced ☞ Intermediate ☞ Foundation

Communication

Free writing exercise:
Tick level achieved
For each ☞ score: 1 at level 1 3 at level 3
2 at level 2 4 at level 4

Level	Language	Grammar & Structure	Punctuation	Spelling
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Total score: ☐

Is the student Studying GCSE English? ☞ Yes ☞ No

Action: ☞ None needed (at or above level **or studying GCSE English**)
☞ Help needed

Comment/
Recommendations:.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Need to work on:

☞ Spelling ☞ Punctuation ☞ Grammar/ Sentence structure
☞ Summary Skills ☞ Language Use eg structure, style

Initial Diagnostic Assessment Review Sheet
(IDAR)

Name of student: ..... Tutor Group: .....

Subject/Programme: .....

Subject/Course Tutor: .....

Initial assessment strategy used:

☐ First assignment

☐ Short tests

☐ Special diagnostic assignment

☐ Other (please specify)

.....

Outcomes - please indicate content and tick appropriate column:

General Content:	**Good**	**Average**	**Poor**
Punctuality			
Keeping to deadlines			
Organisational skills			
Standard of work			
Subject Specific Content:			

This student

☐ should cope well with the programme

☐ will need extra help

Please specify:

.....

.....

.....

ATTENDANCE (from paper registers)

	= number of 45 minute session attended
	= number of 45 minute sessions possible

Summary

Achievement (A-E) ☐ Effort (1-5) ☐

Student Signature: ..... Date: .....

Tutor Signature: ..... Date: .....

IDAR (SC/RO/A)

Lewisham College

Course Entry Criteria and Initial Assessment

Entry Criteria

Course Entry Criteria are the skills, knowledge and personal motivation which are the necessary and sufficient starting points for entry on to any course. Their purpose is to inform the placement of applicants so that students undertake courses which are relevant to their personal goals and are at the correct level for their current skills and knowledge. Course Entry Criteria provide:

- a carefully thought out framework on which to base the design of entry assessments and entry procedures;
- explicit entry requirements to facilitate pre-application guidance and contribute to equitable entry procedures; applicants who are refused a place on a course or referred onto other courses should have clear reasons for this.

Entry Criteria are developed from an analysis of the course requirements which will include course content, modes of delivery, course materials, methods of assessment and key skills. A realistic appraisal of the skills which can be developed and knowledge imparted within the time frame of the course must form part of this analysis.

Currently, all courses with over 250 guided learning hours should have Course Entry Criteria. Course Entry Criteria should be reviewed annually because:

- courses change and evolve in both content and delivery;
- reflection on previous students' successes and difficulties can inform and develop course teams' understanding of the essential requirements for their courses, whether the pre-entry assessments identify these requirements and where additional teaching may be indicated;
- entry criteria and admissions assessments and procedures have a direct relationship to retention rates and achievement;
- entry criteria should be useful and relevant to the course teams using them.

Course entry criteria are published in the Admission Handbook.

Initial Assessment

The term initial assessment refers to assessment undertaken prior to entry and during the induction period.

Pre-entry Assessment

Pre - entry assessments are directly linked to the Course Entry Criteria and form the basis on which students are offered places on courses. Course teams at Lewisham College have traditionally been responsible for designing their own entry assessments with some support from Learner Services. Pre-entry assessment will generally assess only the skills and knowledge which are essential starting points for entry on the course. The assessment can be through written tests, interviews and practical tasks.

Many of the pre-entry assessments have a diagnostic element. Among other things this helps course teams to identify students early who may need additional support and advise applicants appropriately when they are being referred on to other courses. It is one of the principles of assessment at Lewisham College that students should not be over assessed, both because of the intrusive nature of assessment and because it is very time consuming. All assessments, including pre-entry assessment, should inform teaching priorities.

Induction Assessment

Induction assessment refers to the additional initial assessments which take place on course during the induction period. As seen above, pre-entry assessment should provide teachers with useful information and contribute to the development of student profiles. Induction assessment should build on this and the type of assessment undertaken will depend on each course.

Generally, most courses aim to place students at the correct level within the programme area on entry, not least because this is what students themselves expect. Additional on course initial assessments may take many forms e.g. first assignments, observation of class work, timed in-class assessments, practical tasks etc. As a result of these assessments students may move courses but a more important outcome is that teachers will gain insight into individual requirements and can select students for additional support. In addition, they will gain information about the skills and knowledge of the group which may necessitate some modification of teaching priorities.

The Induction Assessment Handbook was produced as a guide for teachers. It followed on from two projects, one to develop course entry criteria and the other to develop pre-entry assessments. Both involved working directly with course teams. The third stage, the development of induction assessments, was done in the form of a general guide. Much of what is written in the handbook is also relevant to the development of pre-entry assessments and it includes a set of principles which should inform initial assessment at the college.

In addition to the above, course teams on all FEFC funded courses of 450 guided learning hours and above, give their students the BSA reading and numeracy tests during the induction period. These are screening tests which are not course related and therefore have limited value in identifying students for additional support and should always be supplemented by other assessments. Their main function is to provide cross college and inter college profiles of students' basic skills.

Assessment in Induction

Purpose of Assessment

Formal assessment during induction is part of the process of getting to know students. The process will have begun pre-entry with interviews and, in many cases, assessments.

The purpose of assessment is to build up:

a) A profile of individual students and their learning requirements, particularly those who may need additional support;

b) A group profile to inform course teaching.

Deciding what to assess in induction

Any assessments that are carried out during induction should be based on the demands of the course. Tutors need to be clear:

I. what skills students should have when they begin the course

II. what skills will be taught and

III. what skills they should have when they finish the course, in the context of the activities which the course will demand.

Throughout the Handbook we have listed some of the more common on-course activities and underlying skills.

Lewisham College's Admissions Handbook contains Course Entry Criteria for most of the full-time courses in the College. These are under review, as course specific pre-entry assessments are developed, but they can form the basis for understanding the skills needed on the course.

When devising assessments, tutors should make decisions about what are the essential skills and knowledge the student needs to access the course. In order to do this, they need to think about:

1. Course delivery methods (where skills might include note-taking, understanding vocabulary).

2. Tasks which have to be performed on courses such as assignments or in-class activities (where skills might include extracting information from texts, writing an explanation or a description, calculating an area, making an oral presentation).

3. Final assessment which might be portfolio presentation or final exams.

Tutors will also have to come to a consensus about the **level** of skills which they are looking at. For example, what sort of texts do students have to be able to read at the beginning of the course? What level of writing skill do they need? Is knowledge of a specific vocabulary necessary? How much concentrated listening will they have to do?

Some courses may already have good diagnostic assessments of students' basic skills which were given pre-entry. In which case the induction period may be used to:

?? assess students' ability to apply these skills in a variety of course based contexts;

?? assess these skills in greater depth, either at the class level or at an individual level for those students who found certain tasks difficult;

?? assess other skills which students will need to use on-course but which were not seen as entry requirements e.g. the ability to research information to complete a task.

Only assess what it is necessary to know for teaching purposes, either at an individual or a group level.

Types of course related assessment

The amount of assessment which takes place in induction and the type of assessment used will depend on the course. It is important not to over assess. The results of all assessments should be reported to students and used to inform teaching.

There are two approaches to devising course based induction assessments and for many courses a combination of the two will be most appropriate.

1. Induction assignments

These can be designed to assess a range of skills and activities which students need to do on course.

The advantages of this type of assessment are:

a) Students can be accredited with the work they do.

b) It is closer to the real situation in which students will work and they can use their own strategies to cope friends, extra time.

c) This type of assessment can be combined with teaching input and may be seen as more productive by students and lecturers.

d) It may be less stressful than more formal timed assessments.

The disadvantages are:

a) If students do not complete the assignment successfully, the assessment may not give you enough information as to the reason

b) Naturally, students will always try to show their skills to the best advantage, particularly if marks are involved. The opportunity for outside help may disguise difficulties which, for progression and support reasons, are important to understand.

Some of the disadvantages of this type of assessment can be reduced by students doing at least part of the assessment in controlled situations where lecturers can observe how students approach certain activities.

2. Controlled assessments of particular skills

These are assessments given in controlled conditions e.g. in class and possibly timed, where skills are isolated and assessed individually.

The advantage of this type of assessment is:

i) Tutors will get a clear indication of a students' level of skill in a particular area and an understanding of why they may find certain course activities difficult.

The disadvantage is:

I) This type of assessment can be intimidating, particularly to adult returners to learning and young people with poor experiences of school

The induction period is four weeks in length and this type of assessment may be more appropriately given towards the end of this period.

Making judgements about students as learners

Although this Handbook has broken up assessment into skill areas, it is important, when making judgements about students' skills and learning requirements, to consider all the evidence you have about them as learners. Formal assessments are only part of the picture. They will contribute to the process of making informed judgements about what will enable students to be successful on the course and to progress as they would like. Observation, past experience, consultation with other tutors and the students themselves are also part of this process.

These assessments are a starting point and, as such, should inform teaching and provide a base on which to evaluate progress. They are a tool and their

effectiveness will depend on how well they are designed and how they are used.....

Recording assessments and building up student learning profile

At the end of the induction period you should have a learning profile for each student. The formality of the this profile, the information included and how it is recorded will depend on course demands. Below are some suggestions as to the information it may be useful to include in this profile>

Record of assessments

Assessment results, if they are to be a useful part of any student profile, need to be recorded in a way that will be informative and clear. For this reason, a numerical score is inappropriate. A series of profile statements closely linked to the skills assessed will give a much clearer picture of the students skills. If it is recorded so that there is space for comments and observations where necessary it should become a useful working document.

Below are some examples of the kinds of profile statements which may be used. They will of course vary from course to course but will always relate specifically to what has been assessed.

Reading skills

e.g. Record the ability of the student to:

* find the main point in an appropriate level of text
* find specific information in an appropriate level of text
* use inference to find information in an appropriate level of text
* select, evaluate and synthesise information from given sources

Writing Skills

e.g. Record the ability of the student to:

* spell so as to be clearly understood
* structure the piece of writing logically
* choose appropriate language for different contexts

Numeracy skills

e.g. Record the ability of student to:

* write numbers as words and figures from 1 to 1000
* understand the significance of the decimal point
* multiply whole numbers and decimals from 1 to 1000
* use a calculator

Listening skills

e.g. Record the ability of the student to:

* understand and follow instructions
* understand information given in class
* understand and follow group discussions

Speaking skills

Record the ability of the student to:

* ask clearly for help or information
* participate in group discussions

Where the assessments are based around assignments, it is useful to record individual activities/skills involved in the assignment

e.g. Record the student's ability to:

* understand the assessment criteria of the assignment
* research information required
* present the assignment in the appropriate format
* write appropriately - length
  organisation

What you include will depend on how you have designed the assignment.

Factual information

The following is some of the factual information which may be useful to keep with your assessment results:

Name
Age
Education since the age of 11
Qualifications (including those taken outside the U.K.)
Languages spoken
Languages read/written
Student's first language`
Any extra support given at school/statement

Learning histories

Students come to college with a wide variety of expectations and experiences of learning. Many of them will have had poor experiences of school or be very unconfident because they have not been in education for a long time. Part of the process of getting to know students in induction in order to support their learning is to find out their attitudes and feeling about learning and particular skills. For example, many students are very worried about their ability to tackle maths. This information can be collected individually but it can be a productive experience for students if these matters are discussed in class and then perhaps followed up with individual questionnaires.

The Principals of Initial Assessment

?? There should always be a clear purpose to assessment.

?? The person begin assessed should understand that purpose.

?? One stage of assessment should inform the next so there is not an overlap of information or over assessment.

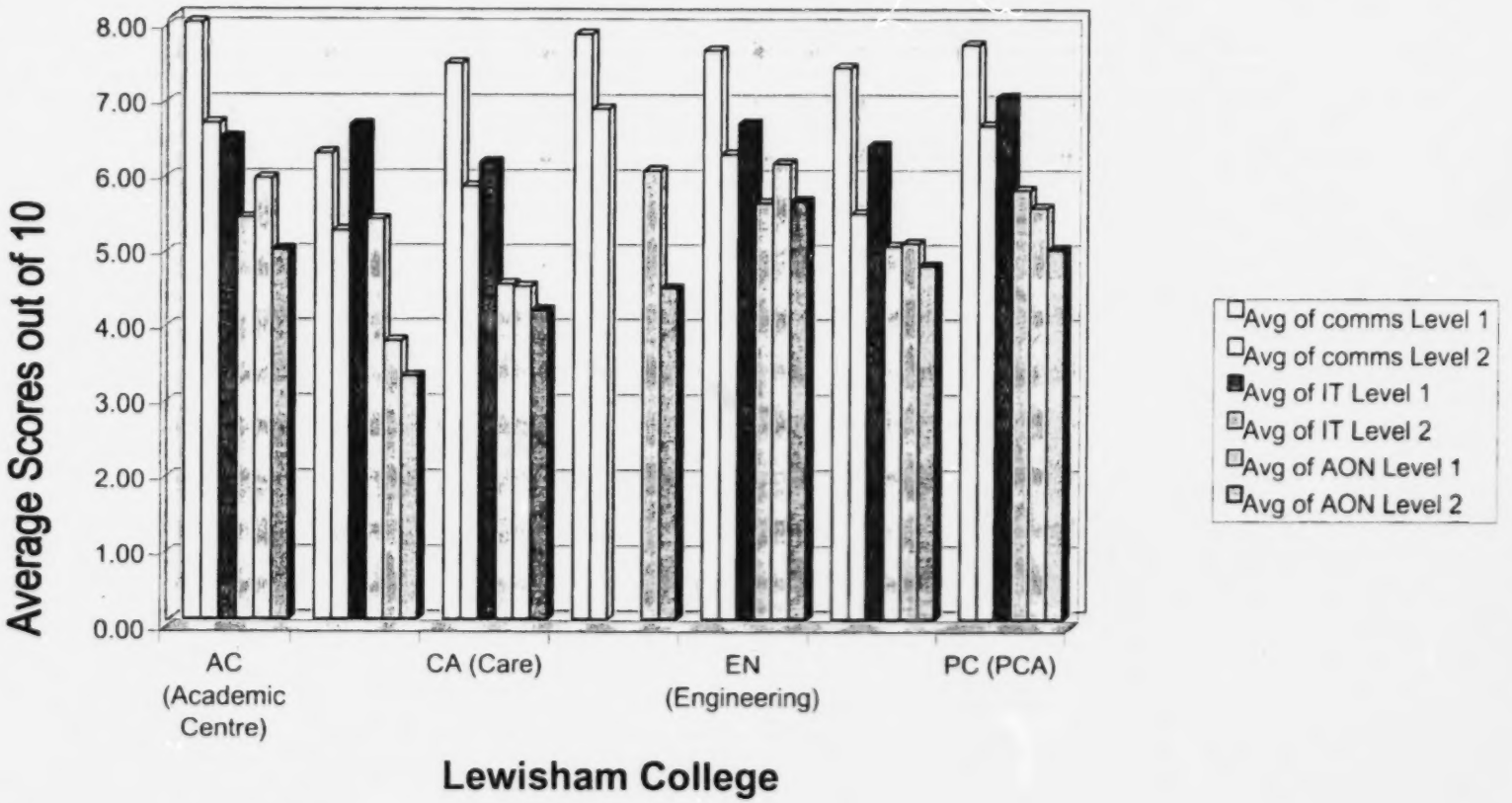
?? Assessment should be related to context.

?? Assessment should not only relate to language and number skills but to other skills and knowledge which are relevant to the demands of the course.

?? Results/outcomes should be indicated in a positive way.

?? The next stage in the process should be clearly indicated.

Aggregate Data from Key Skills Screening Tests



MIDDLESBROUGH

COLLEGE

A TUTOR GUIDE

TO

LEARNING PREFERENCES

Thinking about how students learn
through working with Learning Styles

Version 4
September 2002

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

First Things First - A Forward

Welcome all Colleagues, to version 4 of The Tutor Guide to Learning Preferences. This year the guide is a slimmer volume, which is designed to support staff about to use the Learning Preferences Questionnaire with their students, or for those teachers utilising the results of the screening. There is a separate Student Guide to Learning Preferences.

The recognition of Learning Preferences (LPs) in schools and colleges throughout the country is now common good practice. Indeed some school leavers in our groups may know their own LP. This is particularly the case if they are from the Excellence in Cities area where there has been much staff and curriculum development going on in the schools to improve the achievement rates and aspirations of young people.

It is no illusion to state that staff working at previous colleges and now at Middlesbrough College who have been using the LP screening and have adapted their teaching styles to accommodate different learners are among the leaders in quality education.

To those of you who are familiar with LPs and competent in providing relevant classroom experiences geared to different learning styles, I hope you still find this summative guide useful. Those who are less familiar in using LPs will, I hope, find clear explanations of what LPs are, how we screen for them and how to use that information. Everyone should find something useful, such as the attention drawn to Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans for recording LPs. I, for one, have found the preparation of this guide helpful in clarifying in my own mind what we are doing as teams, and I hope you do in using it!

This year, for the first time, we have appointed Learning Preference Champions following the successful pilot scheme of enthusiastic volunteers last year. The LP Champs do not purport to be experts but rather to champion the cause of LPs. Each Faculty has an identified champion who is there to help and support staff to use learning preference theory effectively in the classroom. Along with the Teaching & Learning Mentors, the LP Champs will work with us all to provide valuable quality improvement. Get to know your LP Champ. Share ideas on teaching and learning styles with your work colleagues. Above all, let's use the information gained from student screening to inform our teaching styles.

As this goes to print, we have another **first**, in that we are preparing to have student intranet version of the LP Questionnaire ready for use. The

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

paper-based version is still available. However, students completing the questions on-line will mean the results will be fed automatically into a database. This will enable any teacher to extract the results for their class from the system. The LP Champs will keep you all updated on the progress for this and, of course, the availability of computers will be crucial in the success of the operation.

Screening for Learning Preferences

It is important that we all understand who we are screening and why. Any member of staff who has not had a go at "testing" for their own learning style might like to have a go. It should teach you something about how you approach teaching! (If you want some help, ask your Champ or me!)

Who do we screen?

- ?? All first year full time courses 16 - 18 year olds
- ?? Any second year groups or continuers for whom the personal tutor would like to provide up-to-date information
- ?? Any adult learners on full time programmes
- ?? Any courses where the duration is in excess of 30 hours

How?

- ?? Screening to take place during the first three weeks of the programme
- ?? LP Champs will provide paper-based questionnaires and detail of on-line availability
- ?? Results will be collated and distributed to teaching staff as appropriate (Champs will keep you informed)

Who carries out the screening?

Pilots and previous experience show that:

- ?? Personal Tutors are the best people to carry out the screening, preferably during Induction and certainly early in the course
- ?? In the case of part time students a local decision needs to be made by the curriculum manager as to who will do the screening
- ?? Whoever screens needs to introduce the topic with the students and continue to follow up on the results in the course of the year
- ?? It is the responsibility of all teachers then to use the results of the student profiles in each group

Why screen for Learning Preferences?

Evidence from education theory proves that to move from a culture where teachers teach to one where learners learn is the key to raising achievement in education. As a college we have decided that one starting point for improving the quality of learning is that all teaching staff make themselves aware of the natural learning preferences of their students. So this is where we shall begin!

The Inclusive Learning Agenda

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be ignited"
(Plutarch, Greek philosopher & historian)

Inclusive Learning (IL) is an approach to education and training, which focuses on quality improvement and concerns the ethos of the whole organisation. In his report Inclusive Learning, Professor Tomlinson (1996) stated that:

> "Inclusive Learning is all about improving the match between the individual learner and the educational environment. A central part of this process is enabling the learner TO DEVELOP GOOD LEARNING STRATEGIES."

Since the publication of the Tomlinson Report, colleges have striven to become more inclusive in their approach. As co-ordinator for Inclusive Learning at Middlesbrough College, I have been charged with the task of creating with you an inclusive learning college. The seeds are already sown and now is the time to bring the IL agenda closely into line with all that we do in devising, delivering and promoting our teaching and learning strategy.

The IL College:

- ?? Promotes inclusiveness in all its dealings
- ?? Knows its population
- ?? Identifies the individual needs of all its members
- ?? Meets those needs

The IL Teacher:

- ?? Understands how learning preferences and teaching styles impact on performance
- ?? Provides materials to reach and stretch each student
- ?? Gets results that demonstrate the success of the quality of provision

The IL agenda is the over-arching impetus to deliver the Government agenda on college improvement. This is emphasised by the fact that the current Inspection framework is examining the inclusive learning approach of colleges.

The key phrase from Tomlinson in the above extract is: "to develop good learning strategies". The best way to do that is to use our understanding of how students learn best as both individuals and groups and to provide for the range of ability to reach and stretch them all. This is where our use of learning styles comes into play. By identifying the preferred learning styles of our specific students, we should plan and deliver

content not to feed information alone but to teach the learners to learn. The vehicle for the learning is the variety of methods we use to pass on information and lead students to thinking through and problem solving for themselves.

Using and understanding learning styles

Inclusive learning is recognised when

- Students are engaged in learning and not passive recipients
- The learning preferences of students are seen to be influential in the range of learning experiences provided
- It informs us how to manage the whole group
- LPs enable us to plan a suitable assessment strategy to include opportunities for all learners
- Individuals are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and action plan to address the issues
- The preferred learning style is balanced by the development of other styles during a learning programme
- The range of teaching and learning styles in any delivery situation is matched to the needs of the learners
- Students are able to exploit their learning preference and to develop other learning styles to become more competent in learning to learn
- The whole environment is geared to learning in preference to teaching (the shift from teachers teaching to learners learning)

The Multiple Intelligences Theory of Learning Preferences

The Student Guide to Learning Preferences displays the seven learning styles assessed in our screening programme, which come from the Professor Howard Gardner (of Harvard University) research work on learning. On Pages 3 to 9 of the students' guide there are bullet points that provide some key characteristics of the seven intelligences, or learning styles. It is very important that we stress to students that this assessment is NOT about how intelligent anyone is. It is an identification of HOW we personally prefer to learn at this point in time. The whole point of what we are doing in teaching & learning is to move the students into new and successful ways of learning and we do that by extending the repertoire of how we teach. Multiple Intelligences (MI) is one model of learning preferences and the one we are using. Some of you may be more familiar with VAK which is a more simplistic and direct approach to learning theory and is actually incorporated into MI. On the next page I have drawn together some of the indicators to us as teachers for the LPs displayed by students.

Linguistic learners: relate most easily to words; enjoy reading, writing and speaking; can often be relied upon to join in discussion
Are often comfortable when teacher is speaking and giving information or handed information in written form
Enjoy the challenge of word games; possibly a good speller and definitely a wide vocabulary amongst their peers;
Has good ability to reason; may be argumentative; probably a refined sense of humour
Can follow research tasks well and produce own interpretation of work in variety of verbal forms

Logical or mathematical learners: relate most easily to abstract thinking; to being challenged to be independent in their thinking
Enjoy anything to do with numbers; spot sequences easily; can often get the answer to a problem but find it harder to explain
Use logic to solve problems; enjoy experimenting; like to be precise, to be given precise instructions and to follow directions to the letter
Prefer to take orderly notes; keep things in good order
Often do not like changes to plans or arrangements; prefer to know the parameters to work within and stick to it
Can process information in steps that follow a logical sequence; often make steady progress; can be good at planning

Visual-spatial learners: relate most effectively to information which is written down or presented visually e.g. handouts, diagrams, pictures
Thinks through pictorial imagery, good at creating mental pictures; can follow embellished accounts of a topic through listening and creating their own mental images
Uncomfortable with teaching delivery when unable to take notes; also likes to doodle; typically makes notes even when handouts given
Very focused on colour; like it, use it and have a good sense of colour
Are most effective when using written communication or visually based material

Musical learners: relate most effectively to sound and the spoken word; they enjoy listening and remember things well which are heard or verbally explained; they rely on being able to concentrate on the speaker or the source of the sound
Very aware of pitch and timbre; may be very sensitive to tone of voice; may be distressed or distracted by noisy environments; yet able to distinguish detail in oral presentation and always like sound
Hear rhythm in new words; often a good mimic; may be interested in accents; likely to say they like working to music
Can memorise well by creating rhythms and rhymes and patterns
Probably prefers oral feedback but would benefit from a combination of written and oral

Interpersonal learners: are the ones who like being with others; relate well to people around them; mix easily; generally not shy
Often have good negotiating skills; can effectively help manage groups because they like to gain co-operation from others
Good communicators, can be manipulative; can be boisterous and tiring
Can generally be relied upon to "get started" on a group activity and often act as natural leaders; can read social situations well; good at working in pairs preferring any activity which allows for interaction
Find it hard sometimes to work alone, prefer to be with others; can display a lack of independence, always wanting to be with others

Intrapersonal learners: are possibly the most introspective of our students; can have a well-developed sense of self; may be too self-critical and need their confidence boosting; very private person
Tend to be very aware of own feelings and can be very sensitive to others
Likely to be highly self motivated, focused and irritated by distractions
Want to be different, to stand out from the crowd, often to be alone; may come late to sessions; may find it hard to accept responsibility for group work
Deep awareness of own strengths and weaknesses; may find it hard to talk about themselves; may find tutorial situations difficult and invasive

Kinaesthetic learners: learn effectively through any kind of movement, getting physically involved, hands-on activity; very responsive to environment
Respond well to activity if the task is expressed through plenty of movement - change of pace, getting up and doing something, moving round the room, working on a variety of different activities
Can have good body control, timing, reflexes, eye/hand co-ordination
Learns skills through imitation and practice; remembers what they have actually done rather than what they saw or heard
Tends to fiddle around in a classroom situation - pen clicking, tapping foot, swinging on chair or doodling; may take time to settle in class
Can become impatient if session is delayed, they have to wait their turn or there is any kind of delay in action;

There are intentionally some precise indicators for teaching staff in these general descriptors to help with issues of classroom management.
Of course, no one is exclusively one type of learner and it is our responsibility to develop and encourage other learning styles.....other ways of learning. The group profile - the range of predominant LPs across a group - gives us a starting point to provide for individual needs. It informs us where the students are now, and helps us plan how we can move them forward. It is anticipated that over the duration of any programme, the variety of LPs are provided for in order to reinforce the comfort zone of all learners. But it is equally important to develop other LPs, which may be specific to the level of work or curriculum area. Because learning styles and experiences are being developed, second year groups should be re-assessed to record and respond to the changes in group and individual profile.

Issues on Record Keeping for Learning Preferences

The starting point for keeping any records has got to be completing the LP Questionnaire, whether this is paper based or on-line. This will then provide the evidence for teaching strategy planning. The LP Questionnaire is provided at the back of this guide, Appendix 1, and is composed of pages 11-15 from The Student Guide. The questions and "Yes/ No" answers will be familiar to many of you, as will the instructions on page 14 for the student to collate their results. The compilation of the bar chart on page 15 is then to be completed by the student thus providing students with their personal profile for their student records. In the case of the developing on-line system, all the student does is complete the questionnaire on-line and the collation happens automatically with a printable bar graph provided! Again, this is to be transferred to the student file after the discussion and implications have been addressed.

Sharing information:

- ?? It is important that LP assessment is shared with course teams and that everyone is aware that the assessment is complete and the results are available. Once the on-line process is up and running any member of staff will be able to access the results through the database, extracting groups by course, class and so on. Until then, and possibly for convenience in your teaching files, there is a pro forma in Appendix 2 at the back of this guide to help log the LPs of your tutees and to inform staff of the results for their teaching groups
- ?? Appendix 3 is a copy of the Guidance For Course Review Meetings for the year commencing September 2002. This is a reminder that the first meeting of the year has item 2.3 Learning Preferences - share with team
- ?? Appendix 4 has sample Scheme of Work and Lesson Plan documentation to emphasise again the importance of making reference to LPs in the planning and delivery of courses.

Remember that in planning and delivering, no one is expected to cover all the strategies, preferences, key skills or opportunities in any one session! Rather to demonstrate the awareness of the needs of the group and the balance of addressing the variety of issues over the duration of the course.

- ?? Appendix 5 is a checklist of some teaching and learning strategies which you may have used before, but which may be useful for others to think about and discuss in teams to extend the range of

activity or confirm the variety you already provide. This can be helpful in planning and working with your LP Champ to provide diverse activity and assessment opportunities.

A RANGE OF TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS

This list provides a guidance sheet to help identify some of the range of activities for student learning. It may also give some fresh ideas for developing new teaching and learning strategies in the classroom. The list could be used as a checklist of evidence for each course.

Staff member:	Course:
Year:	Register:

☙ Action planning	☙ Feedback (oral)
☙ Analogy	☙ Feedback (written)
☙ Analysing information	☙ Feedback from peer group
☙ Assessment (tutor)	☙ Fieldtrips
☙ Assessment (peer)	☙ Game
☙ Assignment (written /oral/recorded)	☙ Guest speaker
☙ Brainstorm/thought-shower	☙ Guided visualisation
☙ Briefing / de-briefing	☙ Ice-breakers
☙ Buzz group	☙ ILT (info. learning technol.)
☙ Calculation	☙ Internet search
☙ Case study	☙ Interviews
☙ Categorising	☙ Journal
☙ Classifying	☙ Lecture
☙ Cloze exercise	☙ Listening
☙ Coaching	☙ Looking and listening
☙ Computer simulation	☙ Listing
☙ Debate	☙ Log book
☙ Demonstration	☙ Making charts/visual aids
☙ Diagrams	☙ Making products
☙ Diary	☙ Memorising
☙ Discussion	☙ Mentoring
☙ Drama	☙ Mime
☙ Drawing	☙ Mind-mapping
☙ Essay writing	☙ Mnemonics
☙ Model essay reading	☙ Model making
☙ Evaluation (self/peer/tutor)	☙ Modelling good practice
☙ Experiential learning	☙ Note-making
☙ Experiments	☙ Note-taking (tutor checked)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

☙ Observation	☙ Scenarios
☙ Outlining	☙ Self-assessment
☙ Painting	☙ Seminar
☙ Pair work	☙ Simulation
☙ Peer teaching	☙ Singing
☙ Performance	☙ Song writing
☙ Presentation (oral)	☙ Sorting
☙ Presentation (display)	☙ Student demonstration
☙ Problem solving	☙ Taking things apart
☙ Project work (extended)	☙ Teacher demonstration
☙ "Putting on heads"	☙ Team work
☙ Puzzles	☙ Telling stories
☙ Question & Answer	☙ Tutorial
☙ Questionnaire	☙ Visits / visitors
☙ Quiz	☙ Visualisation
☙ Reading / shared reading	☙ Watching TV / Film / demo
☙ Reflection	☙ Word problems / games
☙ Research	☙ Writing tasks/ tests
☙ Re-writing/ drafting text	☙ Writing for real purpose
☙ Riddles	☙ Writing case studies
☙ Role play	☙ Writing songs / poems
☙ Rote learning	☙ Writing scripts
.....and some other methods I use with this group are:	
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙
☙	☙

MIDDLESBROUGH COLLEGE

STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Personal Activity

Checklist for Developing Learning Preferences in my Teaching

THE WAY FORWARD

- Awareness of own preferred Teaching Style
- Find out my students' Preferred Learning Styles
- Plan work to encompass range of Learning Preferences
- Draw students' attention to LPs in all your work with them
- Over time, cover the full range of LPs in your whole teaching programme
- Tell the students what you are doing
- Record LPs in SOW and Lesson Plans
- Consider how any assessment activity you set includes options to enable preferred learning styles to be reflected
- Discuss LPs in Course Teams - get the whole picture from colleagues
- Identify your Faculty LP Champion
    - Share your ideas
    - Seek advice
    - Feedback successful practice
- Review Course Retention & Achievement in light of the focus on LPs
- Read / reflect on Student Satisfaction Surveys in light of focus
- Reflect on individual session success in relation to your planning to meet students' needs
- Talk to colleagues about your LP focus - get a buzz going!
- Action Plan for yourself how you will develop your work to encompass LPs. Take it all step-by-step

Remember: "Inclusive Learning is all about improving the match between the individual learner and the educational environment. A central part of this process is enabling the learner TO DEVELOP GOOD LEARNING STRATEGIES" Professor Tomlinson (1996)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Report (DRAFT)

Lesson Observations

of Learning Mentors

SUMMARY

Based on the observations of **nine** Learning Mentors

The overall outcome of the observations demonstrated that the Learning Mentors provided very good teaching and learning. All the teaching and learning observed was good or better.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES

Grade	Good >	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Teaching	**100%**	**55.6%**	33.3%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Learning	**100%**	**22.2%**	66.7%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Attainment	**100%**	**0.0%**	44.4%	55.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Teaching & Learning	**100%**	**38.9%**	50.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

- **100%** of the teaching observed was good or better, **55.6%** was excellent and **33.3%** was very good.
- **100%** of the teaching and learning observed was good or better, **22.2%** was excellent and **66.7%** was very good.
- **100%** of the attainment observed was good or better, **44.4%** was very good.

OBSERVATION OUTCOMES

Observation	Active	Present	Attendance	Teaching	Learning	Attainment	Grade
1	18	16	88.9%	1	2	2	2
2	14	14	100.0%	1	2	3	2
3	31	24	77.4%	2	2	2	2
4	24	18	75.0%	3	2	3	3
5	15	14	93.3%	2	2	3	2
6	19	16	84.2%	1	1	2	1
7	7	7	100.0%	1	2	2	2
8	18	18	100.0%	2	3	3	3
9	19	15	78.9%	1	1	2	1
Total	165	142		14	17	22	18
Average	**18.3**	**15.8**	**86.1%**	**1.6**	**1.9**	**2.4**	**2.0**

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

STRENGTHS

- Teaching was well planned and structured; lesson plans and schemes of work under-pined the planning process.
- Lesson plans identified the students' learning preferences and these preferences influenced the teachers' delivery.
- Teachers set clear objectives and targets for the students and their teaching methods maintained the students' interest.
- Teachers organised well-structured group and pair activities in which the students worked co-operatively and responded positively to their teachers' direction and support.
- The work was challenging and at the appropriate level; it focused the students' attention, and encouraged a positive attitude to learning.
- Teachers provided very good support and guidance and they have very good relationships with the vast majority of their students.

AREAS REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT

- The accommodation and physical resources in some areas need re-assessing. A number of teaching rooms limited the teachers' range of activities and the students' learning.
- Punctuality and attendance need addressing to ensure that the teachers' planning and delivery, and the students' learning are not adversely affected.
- Teachers must be certain that the use of the OHP will be effective, and that it is a viable means of communication in all circumstances. Lighting, font size, colour and content must be appropriate.
- All planning documents should be of a similar standard. They must be informative and up-to-date to demonstrate clearly the teachers' lesson objectives and the place of the observed lesson within the course or subject programme.
- There is a need to clarify the principles and management of Team Teaching. Shared teaching of a class does not amount to Team Teaching. There is a need to identify the roles, responsibilities and leadership of the staff involved.

A SUMMARY OF THE STRENGTHS IDENTIFIED BY THE OBSERVER

	STRENGTHS	%
1.	Clear targets set, outcomes defined	100
2.	Students focused, committed to their work	100
3.	Students work well together and in groups	100
4.	Teacher's Individual support, guidance	100
5.	Teacher's relationships with all students	100
6.	Teaching methods maintain students' interest	100
7.	Teaching, well planned and structured	100
8.	Scheme of work & lesson plan used effectively	89
9.	Work is demanding and students motivated	89
10.	Theory supported by practical examples	78
11.	Students' experience stimulates their learning	56
12.	Teacher supports individual's learning needs	56
13.	Progress monitored, regularly reviewed	44
14.	ICT integrated and effective	33
15.	Students' punctuality	33
16.	High expectations of all the students	22
17.	Students' attendance	22
18.	Well developed assignment and project briefs	22
19.	Health and Safety appropriately monitored	9
20.	Effective use of support staff	0
21.	Key Skills effectively integrated	0
22.	Quality of the accommodation and resources	0

A SUMMARY OF THE AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT IDENTIFIED BY THE OBSERVER

	AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	%
1.	Accommodation and resources	67
2.	Students' punctuality	56
3.	Use of the OHP and lighting arrangements	44
4.	Students' attendance	33
5.	Planning documents, structure and details	33
6.	Integration of support staff/team teaching	22
7.	Stimulate and challenge all students	22
8.	Use of dictation, copying, teacher input	22
9.	Recap to test understanding of previous work	11
10.	"Pace" of the lesson (appropriate for ability)	11
11.	Transition between individual and group work	11
12.	Summary, what's been learned, next stage	11
13.	OHP slides, presentation, font size, colour etc.	11
14.	Assessment and tracking records	0
15.	Planned lessons, not "off the cuff"	0
16.	Variety in the teaching methods	0
17.	Question technique that tests understanding	0
18.	Expectations for all students	0
19.	Involvement of all students in learning process	0
20.	Coverage of work for the level of course	0
21.	Learning materials (avoiding over reliance)	0
22.	Appropriate direction to websites	0

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Observation	Lesson starts	Active students	Students present at the start	Total students present	Last student arrived at	Minutes late
1	10.15	18	11	16	10.24	9
2	13.15	14	11	14	13.37	22
3	15.30	31	24	24	15.30	0
4	9.00	24	15	18	09.13	13
5	11.15	15	14	14	11.15	0
6	09.15	19	0	16	9.19	4
7	11.15	7	7	7	11.15	0
8	13.00	18	18	18	13.00	0
9	18.00	19	9	15	18.10	10
	Total students	165	109	142		58
	Average group size	**18.3**	**12.1**	**15.8**	Average minutes late	**6.4**
	% of active students		**66.0**	**86.1**		

- Lateness occurred in **56%** of the classes; it averaged **6.4 minutes** for the last arrival.
- **66%** of the students active on the register were present at the start of the lesson and **86.1%** attended during the observations.

THE FORMAT OF THE OBSERVED LESSONS

PLANNING DOCUMENTS PROVIDED		%
1.	Lesson plan provided	**100**
2.	Schemes of Work provided	**100**
3.	Syllabus or unit provided	**67**
4.	Project brief provided	**67**
5.	Assessment records provided.	**56**
6.	Portfolios or work provided	**11**

- All teachers provided a lesson plan and a scheme of work. Two-thirds of the teachers provided their exam board syllabus and a project brief.
- The quality of the planning material was usually very good with some original approaches to lesson planning.
- Most teachers provided reliable assessment and tracking records.
- A number of teachers provided additional student information that assisted the observation and helped to place the lesson in the context of the course programme.

ASSESSMENT METHODS USED BY TEACHERS	%
1. Question and Answer	100
2. Completed tests or exercises	100
3. Observation of practical work and class exercises	100
4. Revision or recap exercises	89
5. Group/individual presentations	44
6. Set homework	33
7. Individual student review	11

- Question and answer was the method used by all the teachers to assess the knowledge and understanding students acquired during a lesson.
- Teachers use this method very effectively when they integrated it with other assessment approaches, in particular the completion of tests or exercises and the observation of practical work and class exercises.
- Well-structured revision and recap was a major feature of most teaching and some of these techniques demonstrated excellent practice.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES USED BY TEACHERS	%
1. Whole class teaching	100
2. Using handouts or work-books	100
3. Working in pairs or groups	89
4. Individual projects or exercises	89
5. Using a board or flip chart	78
6. Making individual notes	56
7. Practical or demonstrations	56
8. Using OHP or slides	44
9. Copying from board or OHP	44
10. Using PCs/ICT equipment	33
11. Role-playing exercises	33
12. Dictating notes/reading aloud	22
13. Using Video/TV/slides/cameras	11
14. Internet used for reference	0
15. Use of radio, audio tapes or piano	0
16. Power Point presentation	0

7

- All teachers used a variety of teaching methods to accommodate the diversity of the students' learning preferences.
- All teachers used whole class teaching, supported by handouts and workbooks.
- Most teachers used pair and group activities and individual projects or exercises effectively.
- Teachers who used the white board and/or a flip chard did so successfully ensuring that their handwriting was clear and their marker pen colours were appropriate.
- The use of the OHP was less effective. On the Matron Campus some rooms lacked adequate blinds or had broken and ineffective blinds. This prohibited the use of a visual aid in bright sunlight.

ASSESSMENT BY THE OBSERVER USING THE FEnto STANDARDS		
STANDARD	**STATEMENT**	**GRADE**
Overall	**Very good/excellent**	**1.9**
Planning and preparing teaching and learning programmes	**Excellent/very good**	**1.2**
Planning and preparing teaching and learning documents	**Very good/good**	**2.3**
Managing the learning process	**Very Good**	**2.0**
Developing and using a range of teaching and learning techniques	**Very good/excellent**	**1.7**
Assessing students' needs	**Very good/excellent**	**1.5**
Assessing the outcomes of learning and students' achievements	**Good/very good**	**2.8**
Working within a professional value base	**Very good/excellent**	**1.8**
Working within a professional value base	**Very good/excellent**	**1.8**

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE MODERATION OBSERVATIONS

- Avoid using the prior knowledge you have of the teachers you are observing, good or bad, to influence your judgements.
- Do not allow excuses for circumstances arising during the lesson, in particular at the start of the lesson, to influence your judgements
- Do not withhold awarding the highest grade because it might be seen as too generous. If it is a grade 1, it is a grade1!
- It is important to concentrate on the learning experiences of **all** the active students, present and absent.
- It is important to consider the impact of student attendance on the teaching, learning and attainment grades.
- Maintain a balance between what actually takes place and how this influences the teaching learning and attainment. A major factor at the start of the lesson may have less impact on the final analysis of the observation.
- Ensure that part-time teaches are made aware of the observation protocols.
- Where possible ensure that the profile of part-time and agency teachers is known.
- *Develop a common approach to delivering the student questionnaires.*

SOUTH NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE
STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM
INFORMATION FOR COURSE TEAMS

To all Course Tutors. The following information has been prepared in negotiation with the student. Please ensure that all staff teaching/tutoring this student are informed of these details. **Please note: This is private and confidential information. It must be stored securely.**

Student Support Tutor Extn.

Student..... Course..... Year.....

Background

Suggestion for in class support

Out of class support

Particular exam/assignment considerations/requirements

If you have any concerns about the support for this student and would like to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact the Student Support Tutor

Essential for students supported by LSA

Additional Support File for:

Student: _____

Course: _____

Year: _____

Must include:

Initial Assessment of Needs ☐

Recommendations for Support ☐

Log Sheet (must show clearly any involvement with academic staff) ☐

Review by Student ☐

Review by Academic Staff ☐

Copy of Spreadsheet Information ☐

Notes of any Amendments attached ☐

Summative Information – completed at end of year

Annex A raised, signed and attached ☐

Total number of Tutor Hours _____

Total number of LSA Hours _____

IT Support Hours _____

Other Information, eg, EPA, RNIB _____

Support Tutor: _____

Essential for students supported by LSA

SOUTH NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE
STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

SUPPORT REVIEW - STUDENT

Student Name Course T utor

Course Student Support Tutor

Personal Tutor

How do you feel you are coping with the following elements of the course?

	Always	Usually	Never	Comments
Group work	_____	_____	_____	
Class work	_____	_____	_____	
Understanding course content	_____	_____	_____	
Written work	_____	_____	_____	

Are there any support issues that you feel need to be addressed?

In class

Out of class tutorial

Do you consider that course tutors are aware of your learning needs? .....

.....

.....

Do other students understand your needs? .....

.....

Are you up to date with all set assignments: Yes No

Do you think that you are likely to complete your course successfully: Yes No

Would you like any changes in your support: Yes No

Completed with _____(Tutor) _____(Student) _____(date)

Essential

J/ss/df/forms/supportreviews
February 2002

SOUTH NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE
STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

SUPPORT REVIEW - STAFF

Student Name

Course

Course Tutor

Student Support Tutor

Personal Tutor

Have you received sufficient information about this student? Y N

Do you think this student is coping with the following elements of the course?

	Always	Usually	Never	Comments
Group work	_____	_____	_____	
Class work	_____	_____	_____	
Understanding course content	_____	_____	_____	
Written work	_____	_____	_____	

Are there any support issues that you feel need to be addressed?

Is the student up to date with all set assignments: Y N

Will the student be able to complete this course successfully? Y N

Name _____ Subject _____

Date _____

SOUTH NOTTINGHAM COLLEGE
STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

SUPPORT REVIEW – SUPPORT STAFF

Student Name

Course

Course Tutor

Student Support Tutor

Personal Tutor

Have you received sufficient information about this student? Y N

Do you think this student is coping with the following elements of the course?

	Always	Usually	Never	Comments
Group work	_____	_____	_____	
Class work	_____	_____	_____	
Understanding course content	_____	_____	_____	
Written work	_____	_____	_____	

Are there any support issues that you feel need to be addressed?

Is the student up to date with all set assignments: Y N

Will the student be able to complete this course successfully? Y N

Name _____ Subject _____

Date _____

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").